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Governor Patrick Signs Sister State Agreement with the Regional Government of the Azores

Partnership promotes bilateral trade, investment as well as information and academic exchange

FALL RIVER - Saturday, August 23, 2008 - Governor Deval Patrick and President Carlos César of the Regional Government of the Azores today signed a Sister State Agreement between the Commonwealth and the Azores Autonomous Region. The agreement will promote bilateral trade and investment, technology development, and academic exchange between the two regions, while recognizing the bonds of culture and history shared throughout the years.

"The Azores have had a strong history with the Commonwealth since the first Azorean immigrants settled here in the early 18th century," said Governor Patrick. "With this signing, we further strengthen this relationship, and look forward to the opportunities this Sister State Agreement will create between our two communities."

President César initiated the agreement earlier this year, during a Massachusetts delegation visit to the Azores overseen by the Massachusetts Office of International Trade & Investment (MOITI), and with assistance from State Representative Michael Rodrigues.

"This historical agreement officiates what we have known all along; the mutual respect, the friendship and the understanding that exists between the people of Massachusetts and the people of the Azores," said Representative Rodrigues. "We have been working hard on this agreement since our return from the trade mission to the Azores in February, and now to see it come to fruition, is a proud day for all Portuguese-Americans."

Massachusetts has similar agreements with numerous countries and international regional governments, including Hokkaido, Japan, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa, and Canton of Basel-Stadt, Switzerland. This is the first agreement between the Commonwealth and the Azores Autonomous Region, or any part of the Republic of Portugal.

The Azores Autonomous Region, located approximately 970 miles east of Lisbon, Portugal, and the Medeira Autonomous Region form part of the Republic of Portugal.

"Massachusetts and the Azores have always shared strong cultural, economic and historical ties," said Senator Marc R. Pacheco, Senate chair of the Portuguese-American Delegation. "The Sister State Agreement will provide a significant opportunity to build upon and strengthen those existing ties between Massachusetts and the Azores to enhance trade, tourism and educational programs between the two countries in the future. I commend the Governor and President Cesar for establishing such a protocol."

"This Sister State agreement will strengthen both cultural and economic ties between Massachusetts and the Azores. I am glad Governor Patrick has recognized the natural ties that long have existed between the people of the Azores and the proud Portuguese American Community in Massachusetts," said Representative Antonio F.D. Cabral, House Chair of the Portuguese-American Delegation.

"This accord represents our longstanding relationship with the Azores and further strengthens that special bond. There is so much that we can learn, compare, and collaborate on, but it is through these exchanges that we celebrate our ties and foster a stronger future," said Senator Joan Menard. "I thank Governor Patrick and President Cesar for their commitment."

"I am honored to stand with my fellow members of the Fall River community to welcome the President and the Governor to our wonderful city for this historic signing and celebration," said Representative David Sullivan.

"I am very pleased with the signing of this Agreement. It reflects both the natural cultural and historical relationship between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Azores, and the reality of the modern economic opportunities that exists for

cooperation between us," said Representative John Fernandes. "The Azores Agreement offers an exciting potential for direct cross investment between our two states but more than that, the Azores stands as the gateway to cross investment between Massachusetts, Portugal and the rest of Europe as well."

"I am proud to be part of the delegation along with State Representative Michael Rodrigues and Chancellor Jean MacCormack that negotiated this historic Sister State Agreement between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Azores Autonomous Region, Portuguese Republic. This agreement enhances their longstanding cultural and academic relationship and it facilitates economic development in the areas of tourism and fisheries," said Representative Marie St. Fleur.

For more information on the Massachusetts Office of International Trade & Investment, please visit [www.mass.gov/moiti](http://www.mass.gov/moiti).

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